

SCOLOPENDRA MORSITANS.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Pedes numerosi, totidem utrinque quot corporis
segmenta.

Antennæ setaceæ.

Palpi duo, articulati.

Corpus depressum.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1062.

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS.

SCOLOPENDRA pedibus utrinque 20.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 1063.

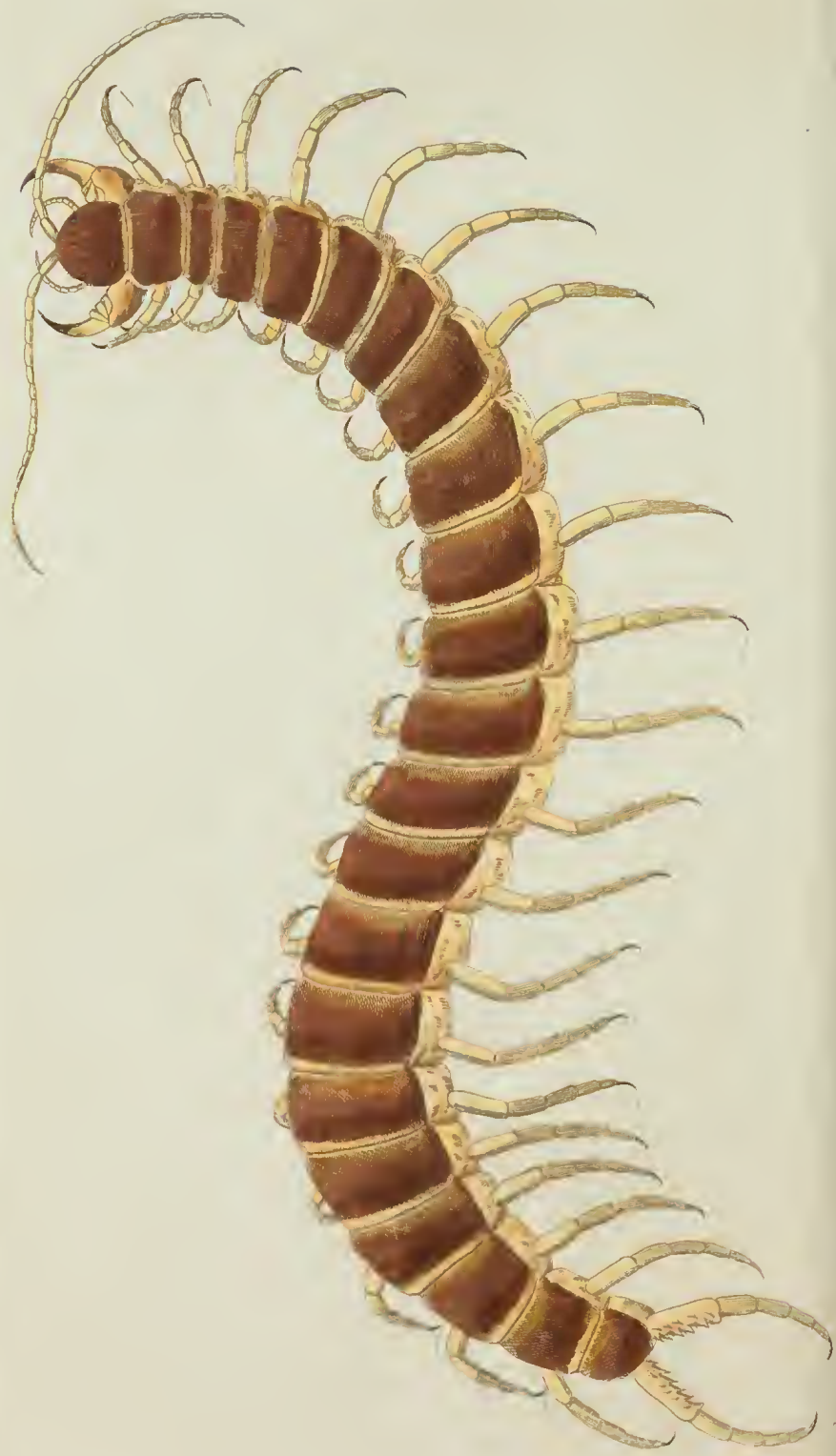
Huic Insecto, Indiam utramque et Africam incolenti, formidolosus omnino et horridus est aspectus. Non satis manifeste patet (ut mihi visum est) discrimen inter duas species Linnæanas, Giganteam scilicet et Morsitantem. Articulos itidem, seu corporis pedumque segmenta, non semper in eadem specie numero æqualia esse opinatus sum. In specie Europæa, ita se rem habere, probe cognoscitur: larvæ enim, seu juniores, pedibus paucioribus quam seniores sunt instructi. Veneno quodam imbuta est species illa jam descripta, quod per forcipem tubulatam, cui apex foratus, morsu in vulnus indit.

Scolopendræ

Scolopendræ hæ ingentes in fylvis plurimæ sunt, variis anguibus cibum præbentes. In domus haud raro irrepunt, Indiam colentibus adeo molestæ, ut lectorum postes in aqua immergere dicantur incolæ, ne noctu incommodi aliquid ab insectis hisce horrendis percipiant.

Veteres qui de Historiâ Naturali scripserunt, multa et dira perhibent de Scolopendrarum morfu, quorum tamen ita incertum est testimonium, ut facete potius fabulari, quam in veritatis investigatione versari videantur.





T H E
G R E A T S C O L O P E N D R A,
O R
C E N T I P E D E .



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Fect numerous. As many on each side as the joints of the body.

Antennæ setaceous and jointed.

Feclers 2, jointed.

Body depressed, or flattened.

Linnaeus.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

SCOLOPENDRA with about 20 legs on each side.

There is something uncommonly formidable in the appearance of this Insect. It is found both in the East and West-Indies, as well as in different parts of Africa. The difference between the two Linnaean species, the *Gigantea* and *Morsitans*, does not appear sufficiently clear, and I am inclined to believe that the number of joints and consequently of legs, is not always the same in different specimens of the same animal; indeed, in

the smaller European species this is well known to be the case; the larvæ, or those which are young, being furnished with fewer feet than when in a more advanced state of life. The species here described, is of a poisonous nature, and is furnished with a pair of forceps, which being tubular, and with an opening or slit towards the points, are the instruments through which the insect injects its poisonous juice when it bites.

These large Scolopendræ chiefly inhabit the woods, where they are preyed upon by different species of snakes; but, like the European ones, they sometimes are found in houses, and are said to be so common in some particular districts, that the inhabitants are obliged to have the feet of their beds placed in vessels of water, to prevent their being annoyed during the night by these horrible reptiles. The older writers on Natural History are full of the dreadful consequences resulting from the bites of Scolopendræ, but their descriptions are so vague, and their accounts so uncertain, that no great satisfaction can be obtained from reading their Histories.